DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Federal Emergency Management Agency U.S. Fire Administration

2003 Program Guidance for the Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Program October 14, 2003

This document provides a summary of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's U.S. Fire Administration 2003 Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Program. It explains how to apply, what items can be requested, and how applications will be evaluated. Please read this program guidance carefully. The Notice of Funds Availability and answers to "Frequently Asked Questions" should also be reviewed when made available on the USFA/FEMA website. Together, these documents provide you with the information you need to complete the on-line application. The on-line application will be available at https://portal.fema.gov from October 16, until November 14, 2003.

Prepared by the U.S. Fire Administration's Grants Program Office

2003 FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY GRANT PROGRAM GUIDANCE

The purpose of this program is to provide assistance to State, regional, national or local organizations to address the issues of fire prevention and firefighter safety. Our primary goal is to address at risk target groups and/or USFA identified goals. By statute the emphasis for this program will be given to the prevention of injury to children

The authority for this program is derived from the Federal Fire Protection and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. §§ 2201 et seq.), as amended. In fiscal year 2003, Congress appropriated a total of \$745,125,000 to carry out the activities of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program. This appropriation included a mandate that no less than five percent of the money be directed towards fire prevention activities. The law also allows for us to provide funding for fire prevention activities to national, State and local organizations as well as fire departments. In order to fulfill the funding requirement and in order to allow other organizations active in fire prevention activities to have access to funding, \$27,500,000 of the total appropriation has been reserved for the Fire Prevention and Safety grant program.

Eligible Applicants

Private and public organizations dedicated to reducing the effects of fire and fire related incidents, and national, State, local, or community organizations (including fire departments) that are recognized for their experience and expertise in fire prevention or safety programs and activities are eligible to apply for funding through the Program.

Fire departments that have received funding under the competitive portion of the Assistance to Firefighter Grant Program in the spring of 2003 are eligible to apply for these fire prevention funds. Funding to any organization is limited to \$750,000 per Federal fiscal year. If a fire department has received funding through the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program, their combined funding from each program is limited to \$750,000 in Federal funds in a single Federal fiscal year. The Federal fiscal year runs from October 1 through September 30.

Application Process

This year's application is automated and available on-line. The application will be accessible from the FEMA and USFA Internet websites:

https://portal.fema.gov

We have designed the automated application with many built-in "help screens" and "drop-down menus" to assist applicants throughout the application process. Another positive feature of the automated system is that it will not allow an incomplete

application to be submitted, i.e., the system will alert you if you have not provided required information. Also, by submitting an application on-line, you will be automatically notified via e-mail that your application has been received. Applicants may access, amend, and save their application as often as necessary during the open application period until they submit their application or the application period closes. *Once submitted, applications cannot be changed.*

The online system will allow one authorized representative of an eligible organization to log in and create a user name and password for the organization. The selection of the authorized representative is at the discretion of each organization. If you have a user-name and password from the Assistance to Firefighters grant program or have been awarded a 2002 Fire Prevention and Safety Grant you should use the same log in and password information. Failure to use your existing username and passwords may delay the processing of your application. The information requested on the automated application replicates the information requested on standard "paper" Federal grant forms. The application includes general questions about the applicant's organization and constituency, as well as questions regarding the proposed project.

Paper applications will be accepted, but are discouraged. We are discouraging paper applications because of the inherent delays associated with processing a paper application. Also, if awarded, applicants who submit paper applications must continue to manage their grants via paper, including payment requests, requests for modifications, reporting, etc., whereas, electronic applicants can perform all these functions on-line. Additionally, paper applications do not have the built-in help that is available to the online applicants. Finally, there is no built-in assurance that paper applications are complete when submitted.

Applicants that wish to apply via paper application can download the forms from the FEMA website (at http://www.fema.gov/ofm/grants2.shtm) or obtain them via mail by calling our helpdesk at 1-866-274-0960. Paper applications must include the following forms: FF#20-16 Assurances and Certifications; FF#20-20 Budget Information--Non-construction Programs; and SF#424 Request for Federal Assistance. Paper applications forms will not be sent to prospective applicants via overnight delivery, nor by fax or email.

The application period for the FY2003 program will begin on or about October 16, 2003. Completed applications must be submitted electronically or postmarked on or before the close of business (5:00 p.m. EST) on November 14, 2003. A confirmation page is provided when an application is successfully completed. We recommend printing this confirmation page along with the username and password created through the online system and maintain as a reference file.

Applications submitted by mail must be postmarked no later than November 14, 2003. Applications <u>not</u> submitted electronically must be mailed to USFA Grant Program, Suite 330, 500 C St., SW, Washington, DC 20472. **No late, incomplete, or faxed applications will be accepted**. No electronically submitted applications other than

those submitted on-line via the automated grant application system will be accepted (i.e., we will not accept applications submitted via email). We will <u>not</u> be responsible for applications mailed to any other address than the one listed above.

A written narrative is required for both online and paper applications. The narrative portion of your application should provide the details of activities you propose to be funded including budget details for each activity. It should elaborate on the funding priorities outlined in the Notice of Funds Availability and this guidance. Minimally the narrative should focus on the benefits the constituency or target audience will gain from the expenditure of the grant funds and what methodology was used to determine the need for this program.

Space for the narrative is limited, so the narrative <u>cannot</u> exceed ten pages. Please note the system will "time-out" on each screen if no activity is detected. If you are entering the information into a narrative box the system does <u>not</u> recognize this as activity. Be sure to click the "save" button periodically to ensure information has been recorded. We recommend that the narrative be typed off-line on any word processing software, such as Word, Word Perfect, Notepad, etc., to avoid losing any work. Once your narrative is complete, you can copy it or "cut-and-paste" it from your word processing source onto the narrative block in the application. Any supporting documents that exceed ten pages will not be included in the review process.

Beginning October 1, 2003, all Federal agencies will be required to request a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number by applicants applying for Federal grants. The DUNS number is a unique nine-character identification number provided by the commercial company Dun & Bradstreet. There is no charge to obtain a DUNS number. We encourage obtaining a DUNS number prior to the application period as it <u>may</u> take 14 business days to obtain the number online www.dnb.com/US/duns_update/index.html. Applicants can also call **1-800-333-0505** and register for a number immediately.

Programs and Program Priorities

We encourage applicants to develop innovative projects that address an identified fire prevention need. The following are examples of initiatives that we deem to be of high importance. This list is <u>not</u> an all-inclusive list of projects that will be considered. These programs are **not** listed in order of importance.

Eligible Activities

- Projects that focus on distributing and installing smoke alarms and checking to assure smoke alarms are operational.
- Projects that focus on planning and practicing escape routes, or conducting home fire safety walkthroughs;
- Fire prevention programs targeting high-risk audiences, including those that:

- i. Enhance national, State, or local efforts to reduce fires and burn injuries affecting children under the age of 14 or adults over 65;
- ii. Target geographical areas with a higher incidence of fire related deaths and injuries;
- iii. Implement projects that mitigate risk in urban cities or groups of high risk to include addressing culturally sensitive materials or addresses social economic challenges;
- Projects that affect the entire community such as educating the public about residential sprinklers, promoting residential sprinklers, and demonstrating working models of residential sprinklers;
- Projects that promote the adoption or awareness of building codes and enforcement, improve engineering or enact fire-related ordinances for new construction;
- Projects that develop and implement national prevention initiatives;
- Local or regional programs that address training personnel in the area of public education, code enforcement and arson prevention.

USFA Goals and Priorities

The three major goals of the U.S. Fire Administration are as follows:

- To reduce the overall loss of life from fire by three percent per year.
- To establish comprehensive multi-hazard risk reduction plans led by or including the local fire service in 2,500 communities.
- To create the ability for communities to respond appropriately to emergent issues in a timely manner.

For the purposes of funding priorities under the Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Program, we believe that the greatest benefit will be achieved through proposals that target the USFA target groups, i.e., children under the age of 14, adults 65 years and older, and firefighters. Proposals that focus on one or more of these groups will receive the highest consideration with respect to funding. Proposals that do not address these priorities will receive very low consideration.

The next highest level of consideration will be provided to applications that include the following characteristics:

• Use of an innovative project to address an identified risk or enhance traditional methodologies. We feel that benefit will be achieved through innovative approaches to fire prevention and safety. Projects will be evaluated on the degree to which they propose an innovative means of

addressing a recognized risk or the degree to which they address a previously unrecognized risk.

- Incorporate partnerships that are established with public or private groups/agencies whose mission serves the population identified by the project. We believe that proposals that incorporate partnerships between groups and agencies whose mission serves the target group of the project will lead to a greater success of the project. Therefore, projects that include such partnerships and commitments will be afforded higher consideration.
- Target geographical areas or audience with a higher incidence of fire related deaths and injuries. We believe there is a high benefit to programs that address prevention issues to a targeted geographical area whether that be location or audience.
- Present a high benefit for the cost incurred and maximizes the level of funding that goes directly into the delivery of the program i.e. projects that include little or no overhead and administrative costs.
- Include sound reasoning regarding the determination of the target audience, measurable goals and project evaluation.
- Propose a program that will be sustained beyond the grant performance period and has a greater potential for long-term benefits;
- Illustrate the applicant has a successful record for timely project completion and performance in similar projects.

Evaluation Process

FEMA will use the above criteria in making funding decisions. Applications that closely meet all of the listed evaluation criteria will be more likely to receive favorable consideration. Additional consideration will be given to applications that directly relate to funding initiatives listed above as well as those applications that propose innovative ideas or implement proven prevention strategies. Federal and Non-federal experts will assist with the preliminary review of proposals and analysis as part of the funding decisions.

The online application will allow for multiple projects to be outlined separately. If applicants choose to apply for several different projects, each should have details on the areas outlined above for this activity including budget details. Be advised that your application should only include activities that can be completed within the one-year grant period.

Other Eligible Costs

- (1) Administrative Costs: Administrative costs are allowable under any of the program areas listed above, in accordance with OMB Circular A-87 or OMB Circular A-122, as applicable. (For more information about the Circulars, go to www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars.) Applicants may apply for administrative costs if the costs are directly related to the implementation of the program for which they are applying. Administrative costs are identifiable costs directly associated with the implementation and management of the grant. If requesting administrative expenses, list the costs under the "other" category in the budget and explain the costs in the project narrative. The administrative costs should be based on actual expenses, not a percentage of the overall grant. FEMA/USFA will reimburse actual expenses only. Examples of eligible administrative costs would be shipping, office supplies, computers associated with the NFIRS reporting requirements, etc. The cost of a grant writer (if specifically listed on your application), is eligible and can be charged to the grant as administrative costs in accordance with the provisions outlined below (see (7) below). We will assess the reasonableness of the administrative costs requested in each application and determine if it is appropriate and in the best interest of the program.
- (2) *Indirect Costs:* If applicants have an approved indirect cost rate, they may charge indirect costs to the grant. If applicants are charging indirect costs to the grant, they must submit documentation that supports the indirect cost rate to FEMA/USFA for review and approval prior to submitting any claims for indirect costs. The appropriate documentation for an approved indirect rate is a negotiated indirect cost agreement. FEMA/USFA will allow the rate to be applied as long as it is consistent with the established terms of the agreement. For example, some indirect cost rates may not apply to capital procurements; in these cases, indirect cost rates would not apply for a grant for equipment..
- (3) Audit Costs: Some grantees with large awards may be required to undergo an audit in accordance with OMB Circular A-133. Specifically, recipients of Federal funding that spend in excess of \$300,000 of Federal funds in a year must undergo an audit. (For more information about the Circular, go to www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars.) The costs incurred for such an audit would be an eligible expenditure if included in the proposal's budget. Applicants may wish to consider including anticipated costs of such an audit if applying for a significant level of funding. FEMA/USFA does not require any other type of audit, therefore no other audits costs are eligible.
- (4) **Renovation Costs:** Renovations to an existing facility are allowable only if the costs comply with the final rule as published in the Federal Register (i.e., limited to minor interior alterations costing less than \$10,000). In order to be eligible, renovations must be essential to the successful completion of the grant scope of work. Construction costs are not eligible under the Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Program. Construction includes major alterations to a building that changes the profile or footprint of the structure. Note: Installation of fire suppression, fire alarms or detection systems are not considered renovations and accordingly not subject to the limits outlined for renovation costs. The costs however need to be reasonable and justified. Fire departments who are considering installation of suppression, fire alarm or detection systems in a fire

department facility are encouraged to apply under the Assistance to Firefighters grant program under Modification to Facilities.

- (5) **Pre-award Costs:** Generally, grantees cannot use grant funds to pay for products and services contracted for, or purchased prior to the effective date of the grant. However, expenses incurred after the application deadline but prior to award may be eligible for reimbursement if the expenses were justified, unavoidable, consistent with the grant's scope of work, and specifically approved by FEMA/USFA. FEMA/USFA will consider requests for reimbursement for pre-award costs on a case-by-case basis.
- (6) **Pre-application Costs:** Expenses, obligations, commitments or contracts incurred or entered into prior to the application deadline are **not** eligible to be included as a grant expense with the exception of grant preparation costs (see (7) below).
- (7) *Grant Writer Fees:* Fees for grant writers may be included as a pre-award or preapplication expenditure (as provided in section 152.7(b) of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Final Rule). But, fees payable on a contingency basis are not an eligible expense that can be charged to the grant. For grant writers' fees to be eligible as a pre-award expenditure, the fees must be specifically identified and listed in the application. In order to be eligible, the fees must also be paid prior to award, e.g., paid within 60 days of the end of the application period. Applicants may be required to provide documentation to support these pre-award expenditures.

Award Procedure

A panel of technical reviewers will assess each applications' merits with respect to the detail provided in the narrative on the activity including budget information, the rationale used to identify the project, and the purported benefit to be derived from the cost. The panel evaluators will independently score each application before them and, if necessary. discuss the merits/shortcomings of the application to reconcile any major discrepancies.. A consensus is not required.

The ranking will be summarized in a Technical Report prepared by the Grants Program Office. The Grants Program Office will make award recommendations to the Grants Management Branch of the Financial and Acquisition Management Division. The Grants Management Branch will contact the applicant to discuss and/or negotiate the content of the application before making the final award decision.

Grantees' Responsibilities

Recipients (Grantees) must agree to:

(1) Share in the costs of the proposed activity, i.e., agree to a matching cost-share of non-Federal funds. Generally, recipients must agree to match with an amount of non-Federal funds equal to 30 percent of the assistance received. However, the match for

recipients that may be characterized as community organizations whose mission serves populations of 50,000 or less shall be 10 percent of the total project cost. FEMA/USFA, in its discretion, will make this determination based upon the organization's primary target population as reflected in such things as its bylaws and mission statement. A copy of the mission or bylaws does not need to be submitted unless requested. For fire departments, FEMA/USFA will look at the population of the department's primary response area. The non-Federal match must be cash; "in-kind" contributions are not permitted. Applicants do not need to have the match on hand when applying or when the grant is awarded. By accepting the grant, the applicant is committing to spending the cost share prior to the end of the grant period.

- (2) Maintain operating expenditures for the one-year grant period in the areas funded by this grant activity at a level equal to or greater than the average of their operating expenditures in the two years preceding the year in which this assistance is received. This program is meant to supplement rather than replace the applicants funding.
- (3) Retain grant files and supporting documentation for three years after the closeout of the grant.
- (4) Ensure that all procurement actions are conducted in a manner that provides, to the maximum extent possible, open and free competition. If the organization has no established procedures, at least two quotes/bids for procurement must be obtained. Documentation of the process used must be maintained in a grant file for the period of three years.
- (5) Report to FEMA/USFA the progress made on the performance the applicant has made on your grant after six months. At grant closeout, applicants need to report how the grant funding was used and the benefits realized from the award in a final report. An accounting of the funds should also be included.
- (6) Make grant files, books and records available if requested for FEMA/USFA's inspection to ensure compliance with requirements of the grant program.
- (7) **If applicant is a fire department** they must agree to provide information, through established reporting channels, to the U.S. Fire Administration's national fire incident reporting system (NFIRS) for the period covered by the assistance. If a fire department does not currently participate in the incident reporting system and does not have the capacity to report at the time of the award, that grantee must agree to provide information to the system for a twelve-month period commencing as soon as they develop the capacity to report.
- (8) Follow the audit requirements of OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-profit Organizations, which calls for grantees who expend \$300,000 or more in Federal funds in the organizations fiscal year (from all Federal sources), must have a single audit performed. (For more information about the Circulars, go to www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars.)

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